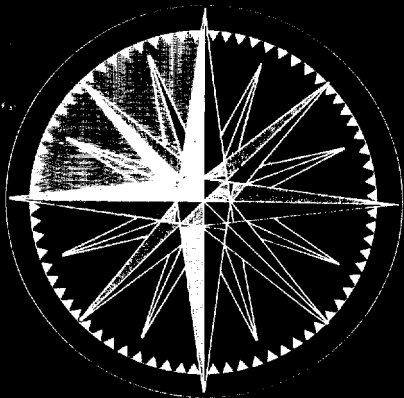


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SPECIAL REPORT

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

THE OUTLOOK FOR FRANCE'S NON-COMMUNIST LABOR UNIONS

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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THE OUTLOOK FOR FRANCE'S NON-COMMUNIST LABOR UNIONS

France's two major non-Communist labor confederations are working toward closer cooperation, but a merger is unlikely. By working together they hope to increase their ability to cope with possible government attempts to dominate the labor field as well as to combat the Communist-led labor confederation's effort to win control of the non-Communist unions through an intensive campaign for labor unity. Nevertheless, Communist overtures for joint action will probably be increasingly successful, especially if the government follows up its mid-July antistrike legislation by further moves to weaken the unions.

Relations With the Government

Both the Socialist-oriented Workers' Force (Force Ouvriere --FO) and the Roman Catholic-oriented Christian Workers' Confederation (CFTC) are uneasy over the possibility that the De Gaulle government may be planning to weaken the unions and reduce their role in collective bargaining. Under the Fourth Republic, these unions had established relations with political parties, parliamentarians, and ministers on a special-interest or pressure-group basis. In the Fifth Republic, Parliament is no longer the key political factor and hence is unable to fulfill its old function of protecting the special interests of important elements in the community. Thus the importance of extra-parliamentary pressure groups like the farmers' associations and the trade unions is potentially greater. In practice, however, the unions have had great difficulty in making their influence felt.

Labor showed its strength during the spring coal strike,

but a rumor current then alleged that De Gaulle would subsequently use the strike as a pretext to curtail the unions' power. His long-term intention was said to be the replacement of existing labor organizations with a syndical movement associated with the Gaullist Union for the New Republic, thus preventing organized labor from emerging as a major force capable of influencing decisions when he disappears from the scene.

The specific policy which the government intends to pursue vis-a-vis the unions is not clear. While De Gaulle might envisage reforms which more closely associate the unions with the government, there is no firm evidence to indicate his intention to break the power of the unions. Labor leaders are concerned, however, about the possible integration of the unions into the machinery of the state, the implications of economic planning for the labor movement, and government domination of wage policy and collective bargaining.

A government-sponsored bill to regulate wildcat strikes

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FRANCE'S MAJOR LABOR CONFEDERATIONS

<u>MAJOR UNIONS</u>	<u>FOUNDED</u>	<u>ESTIMATED MEMBERSHIP</u>	<u>ORIENTATION</u>	<u>CONCENTRATION</u>	<u>% OF VOTE IN 1962 SOCIAL SECURITY ELECTIONS</u>	<u>SECRETARY GENERAL</u>
General Labor Confederation (CGT)	1895	1,000,000	Communist	Basic Industries	44.3	Benoit Frachon
Workers' Force (CGT-FO) *	1947	450,000	Socialist	Civil Service	14.7	Robert Bothereau
Christian Workers' Confederation (CFTC)	1919	450,000	Catholic	White Collar Basic Industries	20.9	Eugene Descamps
* Broke away from the CGT in protest against growing domination of that organization by the French Communist Party.						SECRET 650761 3

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in the public services was given its third and final vote in the National Assembly last week. Labor leaders regard the bill, which requires a 5-day notice prior to striking and loss of pay for strikers, as a basic attack on the right to strike and have said they will "challenge" the government on it in September. The extent to which the non-Communist unions cooperate with the Communist-dominated confederation in opposing the bill at that time will depend in part on how strict the government is in enforcing the law.

The CGT's Campaign
for Labor Unity

The Communist-dominated General Labor Confederation (CGT) has for years subjected the non-Communist unions to pressures for unity of action. In recent months, several developments have encouraged the CGT to intensify this campaign. In the December 1962 social security elections, only the CGT registered a percentage gain in the popular vote and an increase in seats. Since only about a fifth of those eligible to vote in these elections belong to unions, the results do not directly reflect the numerical strength of the unions, but they do confirm that in strictly economic matters the CGT is regarded as the most effective defender of workers' interests.

Joint action on the labor front was encouraged also by

the Socialist Party's tactics of supporting Communist candidates in the second round of the November 1962 parliamentary elections. When its June national congress endorsed coordination of defensive tactics with the Communist Party, cooperation with the Communists was given an aura of respectability. The Communist Party has complicated the situation by taking the public line that differing positions on such issues as membership in the Atlantic Alliance are not an obstacle to rapprochement with the Socialists.

Perhaps the most important development favoring the unity campaign was the six-week coal strike this spring, when joint action extended as far as the merger of strike funds. The CGT's posture of relative moderation and its willingness to cede primary leadership to the free unions during the strike were designed to assure them that its objectives were economic and not political. Under these conditions, the miners' success in defying the government and in maintaining a united front demonstrated the benefits to be derived from labor unity.

At its national congress in May, the CGT made an outright appeal for a single labor organization. Its attempt to obscure its role as a tool of the French Communist Party, however, was not successful. Although membership on the CGT's governing Confederal Bureau was increased to provide equal representation for the so-called

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non-Communists, it was apparent that the bureau continued to be dominated by the Communists.

Pressures on the FO

Much of the CGT's propaganda on labor unity has been directed primarily toward the Workers' Force. Changes in the CGT's tactics, coupled with the feeling on the part of many younger FO leaders that FO's present position is both rigid and stagnant, have made the FO more susceptible than formerly to the CGT appeal. This is especially true at the local level and among the younger workers, who are little concerned about ideological issues but very concerned about the need for a united front to obtain labor's economic demands. A growing number of middle-level FO leaders are also tempted to cooperate with the CGT.

The CGT's success in appealing to these elements is apparent in the "unity" resolution adopted in January by the FO's General Union of Government Employees, the backbone of FO's membership. Although this call for reunification was qualified by references to respect for the principles of democracy and for "divergent tendencies," it has provided the CGT with ammunition for its propaganda barrage aimed at the FO as a whole. Informal meetings between the FO's government employees' union and the CGT are reported to have taken place following the resolution.

The majority in the FO, including most of the younger national leaders, remain firmly anti-Communist. These leaders are dissatisfied with FO's present status, however, and seek to reorganize it, drawing closer to the CFTC as a counterweight to the CGT. They realize FO might lose ground to the CFTC once the CFTC broadens its appeal by dropping religious references from its title and statutes. FO leaders hope to soften the traditional competition between the two unions and obtain a close working arrangement with the CFTC before this change occurs.

FO Secretary General Bothereau is reported to have stated recently that a fusion of the FO and CFTC must take place within two years if FO is to avoid absorption by the CGT and that preparations should begin at once. He is reported to have discussed the problems with his CFTC counterpart in May.

In addition to threats from the CGT and the CFTC, FO leaders face possible losses to the National Educational Federation, an independent confederation of teachers' unions with 225,000 members. This federation reportedly is attempting to woo the FO government employees into its ranks in a grouping which includes civil servants and teachers. Such a merger, or sizable defections of government employees to the teachers' organization,

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could deal a damaging blow to FO. The teachers' group has a long record of unity of action with the CGT and about 30 percent of its membership is composed of the Communist-infiltrated teachers' unions.

When Bothereau's resignation becomes effective this fall he is expected to be replaced by André Bergeron, who is likely to be equally firm in opposing CGT overtures on labor cooperation but more flexible in dealing with the CFTC. If the FO continues its present policies while the CGT becomes more flexible and the CFTC drops its religious connections, the FO may disintegrate --with a large segment returning to the CGT, small elements joining the CFTC or teachers' federation, and the rest retiring completely from union activity.

Pressures on the CFTC

The CFTC's problems are similar to those facing the FO: it must determine its relationship to the other non-Communist unions and to the CGT and reconcile internal minority elements. The nature of the resolution of both of these problems will depend in part on the decision the CFTC reaches on changing its name and statutes to play down the religious affiliation, which offends many anticlerical workers.

There is basic conflict over leaving out the "Christian"

in the union title and modifying the statutes to eliminate references to the evangelical mission of trade unions. After much debate at the June national congress, the CFTC directed a commission now studying this problem to present a report in 1964 which would provide a basis for resolution of the question by January 1965. Although left-wing leaders are pushing for quicker action, the majority in the CFTC's Confederal Bureau doubts it can be achieved before 1965.

Even if the CFTC makes these changes, it still must reconcile with the Socialist confederation its differing view on cooperating with the Communist union. FO leaders are hostile to the CFTC's "opportunistic" policy of cooperation with the CGT. Although CFTC leaders hold that political domination of the CGT by the French Communist Party renders long-range cooperation impossible and are wary of CGT domination of joint action, they do not rule out cooperation on the local level to achieve short-term economic objectives.

The CFTC is becoming increasingly concerned, however, that the CGT's campaign for unity of action with the FO may succeed. CFTC leaders realize that if the efforts of either the CGT or the teachers' confederation are successful, the CFTC will find itself isolated. In view of this, certain elements in the CFTC leadership

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are intensifying their efforts toward achieving some kind of understanding and closer cooperation with the FO.

There is a long history of FO-CFTC antagonism to overcome, but for the first time a stage has now been reached where the CFTC Confederal Bureau majority is working toward closer cooperation and the prospective FO Confederal Bureau under Bergeron is not expected to be hostile to this. There is no certainty that the CFTC will alter its statutes and title or that the FO would consent to a merger if it did. For the present the ties between the two unions will probably be limited to informal but closer working arrangements to achieve economic objectives.

Outlook

While there are still major barriers to a merger of the two non-Communist unions, there are definite signs that their leaders recognize a growing necessity to work more closely with each other in the face of the CGT labor-unity campaign. Important elements in both unions remain hostile to fusion, however, and probably only the possibility that one or the other of the

unions would succumb to the CGT's efforts would hasten their reconciliation.

A merger between the Communist and non-Communist unions is only a remote possibility as long as the CGT is openly dominated by the Communist Party. Although there has been a small increase at the local level of those favoring closer ties with the CGT, the tendency has not reached the confederal level. Only very serious disaffection with the government's economic policies or an open attempt by the government to break the power of the unions could bring about close relations.

There will, however, probably be increasing unity of action among the three confederations on both the local and the national level, particularly if the CGT concentrates its efforts for joint action on genuine economic issues. The extent of cooperation between the free unions and the CGT will depend in part on whether the government can undercut the CGT's appeal by satisfying genuine economic grievances among the workers.
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